

Washington Supreme Court declines to redraw political maps, accepts redistricting commission's work

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The Washington Supreme Court will not exercise its authority to redraw the state's congressional and legislative district maps, leaving in place the work of the bipartisan redistricting commission.

In [a unanimous ruling](#) Friday, the court found the commission had substantially completed its work by voting on a map framework just before the midnight Nov. 15 deadline, despite the panel acknowledging that final work on drawing the maps continued after the deadline.

"The court concludes that the primary purpose of achieving a timely redistricting plan would be impeded, not advanced, by rejecting the Commission's completed work," wrote Chief Justice Steven González in the ruling for the court.

The decision lifts uncertainty over the new boundaries for the state's 10 congressional districts and 49 legislative districts, which will be in place for the next decade, beginning with the 2022 midterm elections.

The court order directed that the redistricting commission complete "any remaining tasks necessary" to finish its work.

The mapmaking authority had fallen to the court after the state's bipartisan redistricting commission [failed to meet its Nov. 15 deadline](#) to agree on maps. The commission forwarded its [belatedly agreed-to map proposals](#) to the court, urging the justices to adopt the maps.

Under state law, the court could have restarted the mapmaking process by ignoring the commission's work and appointing an expert to draw new maps. It could have taken until April 30 to complete that work.